The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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ON EASTER DAY.

"Life" is the strain, and "endless life" the chiming bells repeat,
A word of victory over death, a word of promise sweet;
And as the great good clasps the less, the sun a myriad rays,
So do a hundred thoughts of joy cling round our Easter days.

And those so lately gone from us that still they seem to be
Beside our path, beside our board, in viewless company,—
A light for all our weary hours, a glory by the way,—
All, all the dead, the near, the far, take part in Easter day!

They share the life we hope to share, as once they shared in this;
They hold in fast possession one heritage of bliss;
Theirs is the sure, near Presence toward which we reach and strain.
On Easter day, on Easter day, we all are one again.

O fairest of the fair, high thoughts that light the Easter dawn,
O sweet and true companionship which cannot be withdrawn!
"The Lord is risen!" sealed lips repeat out of the shadows dim.
"The Lord is risen," we answer back, "and all shall rise in him!"

— *Susan Coolidge.*

THE EASTER HOPE.

"Jesus hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light."—2 TIM. i. 10.

This is Easter Sunday, the day consecrated by the Christian Church to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus. No other event in the story of the gospel or in human history can be compared with this in the glad exaltation it brings to the world. No other event is celebrated with such universal and triumphant joy. The Easter festival is greater than Christmas, even as victory over death is a greater experience than to begin life at birth, though the one event be the forerunner of the other. Christmas celebrates the birth of new hope; Easter, the glorious fulfilment of that hope. Christmas lit a new light in the world of human life; Easter carries that light into "the valley of the shadow of death," and the darkness disappears from the tomb forever. In the birth of Jesus we have the promise of peace on earth, good will among men. In his resurrection we are assured that all the dead shall rise, that the life of the soul is eternal,—

> "That death is but a covered way
> Which opens into light,
> Wherein no blinded child can stray
> Beyond the Father's sight."

It is an unquestionable fact of history that the Christian Church grew out of the faith of the disciples in the resurrection of their Master. But what does this word "resurrection" mean, as used so often in the New Testament? It is very unfortunate that in much of the preaching of the day

it has come to mean merely the return of the soul to a dead body,—the coming back to earth of a departed spirit to resume again this physical existence. By using the word in this sense, people are led to think that the resurrection of Jesus meant his coming back again to this life instead of its being his rising to a higher life, as the Greek word, translated resurrection, really signifies. There are many passages in the New Testament which show that by the resurrection of the dead the writers meant a going up into a higher and better world than this. But I am unable to find a single place where the word is used to express the idea of the soul coming back to this world to take up once more the old conditions of physical life.

At the time of Jesus it was the general belief of people that the souls of the dead were collected in an underworld, called Sheol or Hades, where all wandered about with no aim or hope. To the thought of the living, life in that underworld was so lacking in interest and comfort that a great Greek poet said, "The lot of a farmer's lad on earth is better than that of a king in the realm of the dead." And it was the very opposite of this dread conception of the future life of the soul which the New Testament writers describe as the resurrection of the dead. To them it meant that, on leaving the material body, the soul clothed itself anew with a spiritual body, and thus ascended to a higher sphere of activity, entering upon an existence full of new life and growth, abounding in peace and joy and hope.

Bearing in mind this meaning of the word "resurrection," let us review the circumstances attending the reappearance of Jesus. When his disciples realized that the Master was dead and the body interred, they were plunged into the depths of despair. The awful gloom of the tomb overshadowed all their fond hopes of him as the Christ of God. Their light had gone out,—that beautiful light which the convictions of the great Teacher had kindled in their minds. Their ambitions and expectations as the chosen followers of the Messiah were forgotten. They were disheartened, desolate, and separated from one another. Indeed, there seemed nothing left for them to do save only to return to their former homes in Galilee with shame and sorrow, once more to ply the oar and tend the nets. But before three days are fully past a marvellous event occurs which immediately illuminates their darkness, changes their gloomy despair to hopeful confidence, turns their fear and weakness to courage and strength, and—drawing together again that little band of timid, broken-hearted disciples—sends them forth, a mighty spiritual force to conquer the world by the power of truth and love, in the name of their crucified Master.

At first thought it looks as if the New Testament writers intended to say that they believed the great Teacher had come back again to this life, taking on the same body as he had lived in before the crucifixion. But when we read their reports of the reappearance of Jesus with more care, comparing them with one another and holding them up into the light of all that preceded and followed, we begin to see that some great change has come over the Master, both in his outward looks and manner and in the relations between him and his friends. For example, the beloved Mary, who sees him first, does not recognize him when he approaches her and inquires the cause of her distress. Moreover, when he finally succeeds in making himself known to her and she is about to embrace him with joy, he prevents it, saying, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to the Father." Then, instead of sitting down and telling this dear friend all about his strange experiences, he sends her away with a message for the disciples, as if he were afraid to tarry longer there. Likewise, we are told that by and by he meets two other friends on the way to Emmaus who do not know him any more than Mary did; and he allows them to tell him all about the circumstances of the crucifixion, giving them no hint of his identity or any word of comfort in their trouble. More than this, when at length they do recognize him at the supper table, in his old familiar way of saying grace and breaking bread, without a word of explanation he suddenly disappears from their sight, to reappear as suddenly in an upper room at Jerusalem where some of the disciples are concealed, from fear of the Jews. He seems to have passed through space like the light, and neither doors nor locks formed any resistance to his approach.

Thus, for a month or more, according to the record, he is seen here and there, converses with his friends, and appears even to eat with them. But all the time they seem to regard him with feelings of wonder and reverence, if not of fear, also; and in no way whatever was their conduct toward him the same as before his death.

Now when Lazarus was raised from the grave, a short time before the death of Jesus, there was nothing strange about his relations with his friends and neighbors that any account should be made of it. They received him as one restored to life, and he resumed the regular modes of earthly existence. From the fact that nothing is said about it, we have a right to infer that he continued to act and think and talk just as he had done before his sickness. But how different is all this in the case of Jesus! He evidently is regarded as on a different plane of existence altogether, being entirely free from the conditions and limitations of our physical life. Therefore, his resurrection could not have been like the reported return of Lazarus. And yet it will not do for us to reject the idea of the reappearance of Jesus as a mere ghost story. Such an apparition, or the belief in it, could not have changed the terror and despair of the disciples to courage and hope, sending them forth as apostles and heroes to evangelize the world. Nor should we conclude with Renan and other modern critics, that the reported appearance of Jesus on that first Easter morning was due entirely to Mary's imagination,—a mere hallucination. For, if we deny the reality of the resurrection, we are obliged to accept a more stupendous miracle in its place, one compared with which the events recorded in the Gospels become but commonplace occurrences. Because we must then believe that an illusion created the Christian Church, converted the Roman Empire, and made Jesus the Saviour of mankind, since it is admitted on all sides that it was the reappearance of Jesus which reunited the disciples and inspired them to begin their wonderful work as Christian preachers and missionaries.

If, then, the resurrection of Jesus was not the restoring of life to his dead body, nor a ghostly apparition, nor yet an illusion of the imagination, what was it? Exactly what the original Greek word means,—a rising up: the entering upon the higher life of the spiritual world. When the soul of Jesus had thrown off its physical clothes, it reclothed itself with the garments of immortality; and he rose into the higher world, whence he was able to manifest himself to his friends, convincing them that death had no power over him or over them. Thus his experience revealed to them and to us a universal law of human nature, that at death the soul does not cease to exist, but rises into the world of spirit, to enter upon another course of action in its immortal destiny. The exceptional thing in the experience of Jesus is the fact that he could manifest himself to his friends, giving them this direct and positive proof of the continuous existence of the soul, thus abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light.

The kind of life which the resurrection of Jesus brought to light is the life of God in the soul of man. Our text does not mean that the teaching and example of Jesus will bring dead bodies back to life again, but that his spirit of truth and love will inspire the soul with a divine energy over which death will have no power. As he once said himself: "He that hath my faith, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and has my faith shall never die." With his conviction of sonship in God welling up in our hearts, we rise at once into this higher life. When we become conscious that God is our Father, and that his Spirit dwells in us; when we have learned to trust in God with the confidence of sons and daughters, and like the Christ are constantly receiving from the Father the spiritual life and love and power which belong to his children; when we are convinced that truth and love are stronger than sin and evil, and must finally overcome them and make them work for the good of all; when we try to serve our fellow-men with Christ-like love,—the love that never fails nor grows weary in well-doing, but is forever going out in sympathy and help for the needy and forlorn, the sinful and the despised,—then we have within us the same convictions as inspired the heart of Jesus; and this is to have in the soul the principle of eternal life,—the life that never dies.

This is the Easter hope,—nothing will die! Science has taught us that no atom of the outward universe can be destroyed,

Then can we think of a human soul, the offspring of God, as passing out of existence? Never, while the Father's love continues its watchful care! This is the conviction that gave the Christ victory over death. With this conviction in our hearts, we, too, shall grow so ideally strong and true and noble that, when the great change comes to us, as it did to him, we shall find it to be like the falling asleep of a child in the mother's arms, to awake in the other world with our faculties attuned to a sublimer development in all that will make our continued life beautiful and useful and progressive.

In that last conversation with his disciples, Jesus says, "I go away, and I come to you." He went away as an outward form, but he came as a spiritual presence. And because he did come, and his friends were able to recognize him and receive from him the help and inspiration they needed to continue his work in the world, they knew that death was the gateway by which they also would pass into the same sphere of divine activity that he had entered upon. And this is our hope, too. The consciousness that we are God's children, that our Father's life beats in our hearts and thrills our souls, will cause us to receive such an inflow of divine life and love and power that we, like the Master, shall rise above the limits of mere physical existence and feel the energy of eternal being welling up within us, even while in this earthly body. Thus we see how "Jesus has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light."

Help us, our Father, to keep our hearts and minds so open to the influences of thy Spirit that we shall feel the Christ-life and the Christ-love permeating our souls; and then, even in this world, we shall rise into that life of the spirit which knows no death, but grows fuller and stronger day by day, till at last it shall burst forth in the beauty and power of immortality. Amen.

—*Alexander T. Bowser.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Miss Mary A. Vinal, secretary, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge.

"The Greatest Thing in the World," "Addresses," Drummond; "Afterglow," Rev. F. A. Hinckley; "Day unto Day"; "Helps by the Way"; "Poems," Bryant; "The Lady of the Lake," Scott; "In Darkest England," Booth; "Let us Follow Him"; "Tales from Shakespeare"; "Cruise of the Cachalot," Bullen; "House of the Wolf," Weyman; "The Four Georges," "Vanity Fair," Thackeray; "Hard Times," "Oliver Twist," Dickens; "Cranford"; "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush"; "Rudder Grangers Abroad," Stockton; "An Old Maid's Paradise," E. Phelps-Ward; "Kidnapped," "Master of Ballantrae," Stevenson; "A Hardy Norseman," Edna Lyall; "The Stickit Minister," Crockett; "The Last Days of Pompeii," Bulwer; "The Prairie," Cooper.

The Jamaica Plain Branch offers the following school-books: "Chemistry," W. Hooker; "Elements of Astronomy," J. N. Lockyer; "Natural Philosophy," L. C. Cooley; "Natural Philosophy," E. M. Avery; "Latin Grammar," A. Harkness; the following French books: "Le Roi des Montagnes," Edmond About; "Mère Michel et son Chat," E. de la Bédollierre; "Second French Book," Henri Bué; "French Primer," Hachette; "Second French Course," C. A. Chardenal; and these German books: "German Grammar," Ahn; "German Reader," C. G. Brandt; "Lectures Allemandes," E. Faure; and "German Composition," Harris.

Any one wishing to borrow books from the Loan Library, please address Miss Gill, Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The following books are offered by the King's Chapel Branch. Address Miss Helen R. Healey, 373 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass.

"But Yet a Woman," A. S. Hardy; "Her Great Idea," "A Stiff-necked Generation," Walford; "Look before you Leap," Alexander; "Kinley Hollow," G. H. Hollister; "Put yourself in his Place," Charles Reade; "Dr. Claudius," Crawford; "The Story of Kenneth," Bayard Taylor; "A

Bid for Fortune," Guy Boothby; "Aulnay Towers," Blanche W. Howard; "Keith Derramore"; "Fadette"; "How to Travel," Knox; Murray's "Handbook to Central Italy"; Murray's "Handbook to Spain"; Murray's "Handbook to Rome"; "Guide-book to Portsmouth"; "New England Handbook of Travel"; "London in Ancient and Modern Times"; "Boston Illustrated"; Black's "Guide to Scotland"; Osgood's "Middle States"; Osgood's "White Mountains"; "Nile Notes for Travellers"; "Indian Biography"; "Friends in Council," "Brevia" (Short Essays), "Organization in Daily Life," Arthur Helps; "Parthenia," L. L. Lee; "The Growth of the Mind," Reed; "Nature and Life" (sermons), Collyer; "The Two Legacies," G. L. Putnam; "Synonyms of the New Testament"; Trench on "Bible Revision"; "The World to Come"; "The Altar at Home"; "Essays from the London *Times*," First Series; "Essays from the London *Times*," Second Series; "Intellectual Life," "The Sylvan Year," P. G. Hamerton; "Memoir of Charles Lowe"; "Self-help," Samuel Smiles; "The Kingdom of God," E. E. Hale; "Short Stories of American Authors"; "Laconics," 3 vols.; "The Denham Family"; "A Boy of Mount Rhigi"; "Abide in Christ," Andrew Murray; Nichols's "Natural Theology"; "The True Order of Studies"; "Miréio," a poem, F. Mistral; "Coronation: A Tale of Forest and Sea"; "Crofton Boys," H. Martineau; "Bits from Bleakbinny"; "Railroads: Their Origin and Problems," Adams; "The Hand: Its Mechanism," Sir C. Bell; "Melbourne House," Miss Warner; "An Egyptian Princess," "Uarda," Ebers; "Sketch of Civil Engineering in North America," by David Stevenson; "Happy Thought Hall," Burnand; "Liturgy for the Use of Sunday-schools"; "Speeches of Benjamin F. Thomas"; "Poems," Wasson; "The Old-fashioned Garden," Hayes; "Syrian Sunshine," Appleton; Leslie's "Autobiographical Recollections"; "Reports of the Fishes, Reptiles, and Birds of Massachusetts."

The following books are offered by the Second Church Branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass. First requests must contain reference.

Arthur's "Sketches of Life and Character"; Davies's "Surveying"; "Shorthand," Graham; "Elementary Geometry"; "Algebra"; "Geometry"; "History of Greece," William Smith; "The Appeal to Life," Munger; "College Series French Plays"; "Greek and English Concordance of the New Testament"; *Harper's Magazine*, 1900; *Review of Reviews*, 1901.

Mrs. Ella M. Hall, Gouverneur, New York, offers the following magazines: *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 1897; *Youth's Companion*, 1897–98; *Sunday Magazine*, 1900; current numbers of *The Cheerful Letter;* the *Literary Digest*, 1899; *Success with Flowers*, a magazine devoted to floriculture, 1896; *Unity*, 1899.

Miss Cora H. Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers: "The Mischief of Monica," L. B. Walford; "Great Expectations," Dickens; "Put yourself in his Place," Charles Reade; "We Two," "A Hardy Norseman," and "Donovan," Edna Lyall.

REQUESTS.

[*Read direction at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send requests for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

Mrs. Parthenia Watson, Albemarle, North Carolina, asks for a piano instructor for her daughter.

Mrs. Sue Quisenberry, Youngs, Virginia, is an invalid, and would be glad to receive books and magazines.

Mrs. J. W. Gale, Concord, North Carolina, asks for an arithmetic by Collar and Elwood or by Sanford.

Mrs. Brownie Wilson, Greeley, Colorado, asks for "Briseis" by William Black.

I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate your paper. I live where I have scarcely any church near enough for me to attend. And my chief pleasure consists in reading; and, as my means are very limited, I am not able to buy very much reading matter. I am so thankful to all the kind friends for what I have received from them, and now I come begging again. I would like so much to get some humorous books, something by Josiah Allen's wife or Mark Twain. I would also be glad to get any of Marion Harland's works. I try to be generous, and pass on all I get after reading them. I thank the one that sent *Household* to me few days ago. It was a real treat to us all. Mrs. M. E. Brown, Way, Virginia.

We have had so much good reading matter that we feel ashamed to apply for more; yet we are in need of school-books, and turn to the same source from which help has come. We would like to have Overton's "Advanced Physiology," Milner's "Standard Arithmetic," Reed and Kellogg's "Higher Lessons in English," Hansell's "Higher History of United States." Would like to receive "To Have and to Hold," and some music, especially "McKinley's Last Words," "She was bred in Old Kentucky," "The Girl I loved in Sunny Tennessee," and some instrumental pieces. Thanking you in advance for anything sent us. Mrs. Lena Norton, Harr Ridge, Alabama.

I would like very much to read Gibbon's History of Rome or any Roman history. Also a history of the Roman Catholic Church. I should greatly appreciate it, and I know it would be very helpful to me. Rev. C. J. Black, Big Lick, North Carolina.

The following books are asked for by Mrs. Ada C. Crews, Mayo, Rockingham County, North Carolina: "The Sorrows of a Secret," "My Sister's Keeper," which are offered by the Cambridge Branch; "Haunted Hearts" and "Mabel Vaughn," by the Newton Branch; "An Egyptian Princess," by George Ebers, by Miss Cora A. Tilden, Box 45, Milton, Mass.; "Lorna Doone," Blackmore, "Robert Elsmere," Mrs. H. Ward, "A Gentleman of Leisure," Edgar Fawcett.

I would be delighted to receive the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Mrs. Dana's "How to know the Wild Flowers," and Alice Lounsbury's "Guide to Wild Flowers," or any similar guide-books to flowers and ferns. "The Solitary Summer," any of Mary D. Brine's or Anna Robertson Brown's books. (Miss) Lottie B. Reed, Athens, Maine.

Mrs. Laura Hylbert, Evelyn, Wirt County, Virginia, asks for current numbers of the *Youth's Companion* or other good reading for the children.

Mrs. Alonzo D. Bibb (formerly Miss Carrie Phillips), Pleasant View, Virginia, asks for the following books: "Blennerhassett," by Charles Felton Pidgin; "Prisoners of Hope" and "To Have and to Hold," Mary Johnston; "Mill on the Floss," George Eliot; "English Orphans" and "Dora Deane," Mary J. Holmes; "The Lamplighter," Maria S. Cummins; "From Jest to Earnest," "Knight of Nineteenth Century," "The Earth Trembled," and "His Sombre Rivals," E. P. Roe; and "Lone House," Amelia E. Barr.

Rev. C. F. Dykeman, Ashton, Minnesota, asks for "Hebrew Men and Times," Allen; "Book of the Beginnings," Heber Newton; "Common Sense View of the Books of the Old Testament," and "A Study of the Pentateuch," Stebbins.

I would be glad to have some books that would interest children, and some on training children, as I have some little ones to train. Also "To Have and to Hold"; "Love Each Other," Mrs. Livingston, "Letters and Social Aims," R. W. Emerson, or any you have to dispose of would be thankfully received. Mrs. H. C. Clanton, Spencer, Henry County, Virginia.

Miss Lucy Abbott is teaching nine little Indian children, and asks for several copies of Warren's "Primary Geography." Her address is Ross Fork Mission, Ross Fork, Idaho.

Mrs. M. E. Maske, Polkton, North Carolina, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Youth's Companion*.

I am an invalid member, and would like some reading for myself and my brothers and sisters. I live in the country, and often get very lonely. I should be glad to receive

the *Ladies' Home Journal.* (Miss) Lizzie M. Bailey, Monroe Centre, Maine.

I cannot thank you sufficiently for reading and cheery letters sent me since last winter: it has been the only real pleasure in my life. I shall be so glad if some one will send me some good books from time to time. The children are in school; and the time is long to me, as I cannot sit up at all. I would like to get a child's life of Christ for my little girl, or Milton's "Paradise Lost," Longfellow's "Poems," or any good books of travels, history, or adventure. I will be so glad to get any of the above. (Mrs.) Claudia Akers, Tolar, Texas.

I must tell you how grateful I am for your many kind remembrances you have sent Haseltine and Lewis this winter. They anxiously run to meet their papa when he returns from the office, hoping they will get something to read or amuse them from the club. We have no school near enough for them to attend, so I have to do the best I can myself to teach them, though with all my domestic work I find it up-hill business. I feel *very, very* anxious about their education. I should ever feel grateful for any assistance you would furnish me to advance them. I would be so glad to get an Elementary Physiology, also a History of United States, and an advanced grammar, Young People's Bible History. (Mrs.) Lela C. Hemden, Indiantown, Virginia.

Miss Mary C. Thornton, Lowesville, Amherst County, Virginia, is very anxious to read "David Harum." She lives twelve miles from the railroad, and would be glad of any good reading.

Rev. J. L. Flow, Cottonville, North Carolina, asks for reading.

Mrs. Telithia Oliver, Blue Ridge, Collin County, Texas, would like to receive reading.

Mrs. Sara P. Boyemon, R. F. D. number 3, Iola, Allen County, Kansas, asks for "Quo Vadis" and Green's "History of the English People."

Hamelton Morton, Jackdaw, North Carolina, asks for the following school-books: Maury's "Manual of Geography"; Bular's "Second Grade Grammar"; Johnson's "Higher Grade Arithmetic."

Mary L. Joyce (eleven years old), Verano, Virginia, asks for reading.

Reading is asked for by Mrs. V. A. Hough, Cottonville, North Carolina.

Mrs. Jennie L. Pleasants, Experiment, Virginia, asks for something by E. P. Roe or Edna Lyall.

Mrs. T. J. Martin, Oritz, Virginia, asks for some religious reading.

Will any one (in a town where there is no library) who would be willing to take charge of a travelling library address Miss Louise Brown, 79 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass. A reference should be sent.

THE MOTHERS' CLUB.

AFFECTION IN THE FAMILY.

Slipshod family government and allowing children to tyrannize over one another are responsible for the absence of affection in families. Or sometimes it is a tyranny of weakness, the younger members holding the whole family at bay.

One day the writer was making a call where the only children, two little girls, were sitting on the floor, busy with their dolls. All at once the younger one broke out in a perfectly tearless, artificial wail. The mother turned, and said sternly to the elder, "What's the matter with Katie?" The child stammered in affright, "She's—she's cryin' 'cau—'cause I won't make her one like this," holding up a newly finished doll garment. "Then give her that!" said the mother, promptly. The child hesitated, and the younger one redoubled her wails. "Do you hear me?" said the mother, stamping her foot. "Give it to her this instant!"

The child reluctantly obeyed, and the mother turned and calmly resumed the conversation.

I continued to observe the two children, and saw the older girl scowling with malignant hatred, while the younger one, with triumphant, taunting looks, adorned her doll with the rifled garment.

Many times afterward I heard this mother lamenting that her children "quarrelled constantly, acting as if they fairly hated each

other." I was too polite or too cowardly, to say, "It is your own fault: your injustice to them is destroying their natural affection for each other."

But the tyranny of weakness is the exception rather than the rule. It is the tyranny of superior age and strength that is to be found in most families. A mother well known to me decided every quarrel between her children according to the age of the disputants. The younger child was always forced to give up to the older. These children, a large family, showed a positive hatred for one another, and always chose to play with the children of other families rather than among themselves. A feud culminated between the two oldest boys. They finally refused to speak to each other or to remain at home together. They continued to time their brief visits home so as to avoid meeting until the death of the older one ended the quarrel. The younger children scattered as fast as they became old enough to leave home; and the mother now most sorrowfully declares her children's lack of affection for their home and for one another to be the greatest grief of her life, and sadly broods over it as a mysterious punishment to her from Heaven, while her children take the consequences of her mismanagement, hating and avoiding one another to the end of life.

[The Editor would be glad to have the opinion of the readers of *The Cheerful Letter* in regard to this point. Is the danger that the elder child will tyrannize, or the younger? Her own observation leads her to the opinion that it is an almost universal thing for mothers to systematically teach the younger child to tyrannize over the elder.]

SHOWERY DAYS.

"First the blue and then the shower,
Bursting bud and smiling flower."
—*Mary Mapes Dodge.*

April is the battle-ground of the seasons in our climate. Not so much "winter lingering in the lap of spring," as the poet has it, as summer pushing forward, impatient to get her buds unfolded and her flowers out of the ground. In this month she usually manages, in the words of the immortal Hosea, to "toss the fields full of blossoms, leaves, and birds," her leaves half open, and her modest spring bloom ready,—hepatica, the pioneer, bloodroot, lighting up the shadowy corners, houstonia, sprinkling the fields, arbutus, opening sweet eyes under last year's leaves.

About the third week in the fickle month she generally succeeds in giving us a foretaste of what we may expect when she gets complete control, and sets us thinking of mountain and seashore.

The bird world shares the unrest of the season. A few hardy warblers hurry past us, full of business,—the myrtle, with his four mystic badges, the pine, with breast of gold, and the fascinating black-throated green, *en route* for the evergreen forests he loves so well. Two or three linger, and finally stay,—the modest-clad black and white, the water-thrush of flirting tail, and the oven-bird masquerading as a thrush.

But May is pre-eminently the warbler's month.

Now comes the leader of our summer choir, the calm-eyed, silver-voiced wood-thrush, making the mornings and evenings glorious for us. But his next of kin, the hermit, steals by in silence, his emotions carefully repressed, his music sealed up in his heart, saving all his sweetness for his wooing-ground farther north. Not so chary of his charms is the smallest singer of all, the kinglet with ruby crown. A mere pinch of gray feathers he looks, with a gorgeous crown of ruby when he expands it to sing. He lingers for days in country neighborhoods and even in city parks, and pours out his joyous song for our delight. He is well worth many excursions to hear. Especially so as other famous singers are about as well,—the misnamed purple finch in all his glory of crimson and snow-white, and the aristocrat of the sparrows, the white-throat, singing, as he goes, a song so distinctive that he has a local name wherever he is. By the Anglo-Saxon of New England he is disrespectfully called "Peabody bird," but by an Indian tribe of the same section—according to Mr. Long—"Killooleet," or "Little Sweet Voice."

Now begins the cheery evening song of the whippoorwill, and the brown-robed house wren may be seen bustling about for summer quarters. Swallows appear with the first of the winged-insect hosts. The barn, the cliff, and the rough-winged swal-

lows, and the purple martin look over our premises and choose their places. A few impatient or bold spirits begin building. Some of the hawks and owls are already settled to their summer work; and now the crow and grackle, and even the robin and bluebird, open the nesting season for smaller birds.

We read everywhere the confident statement that certain birds will do so-and-so, and others will do quite otherwise. But it is never safe to predict what birds will do. Besides having marked individuality, and not the slaves of habit we have considered them, they are constantly changing their ways. Perhaps the spirit of unrest is in the air; but, whatever it is that impels us Americans to move on and ever on, the same propensity seems to infect our birds. They are always ready to try new food or new ways to do things. In the single habit of nesting, several birds have radically changed their customs within the memory of man. Swallows and swifts have become almost parasitical on the structures of men. Formerly tenants of hollow trees, caves, niches in rocks, and similar natural places, they now flock to our buildings, inside and out. Barn and eave swallows seize upon our barns, rough-wings choose crevices in our public buildings, and swifts pre-empt our chimneys. Purple martins have heretofore confined their dependence on us to houses built for them; but last spring I found a progressive colony comfortably settled in the heart of a noisy city, under the arch of an ornamental terra-cotta cap to the cornice of a business block. Woodpeckers, too, have learned to accept our protection and the shelter of our roofs. At least two species have adopted the labor-saving fashion of cutting a door through our walls and establishing themselves within.

Wrens are always making experiments to better themselves. They are not at all particular where they set up their domestic gods. They like best a comfortable wren-house, but will cheerfully accept an old hat or the sleeve of a coat hanging in a shed, a niche in an empty house, or a hole in a post. I have seen a wren's nest in a hollow iron hitching-post in a city street, the birds entering through the hole for the hitching-strap. And I have an oriole's pretty gray hammock, that had been taken possession of by a wren, filled with a mass of sticks in wren fashion, and used as a nursery for pert wren-babies. Nor are wrens the only ones who appreciate a saving of labor. I have another oriole cradle in which a warbler built her nest and reared her bits of nestlings.

Perhaps the most wide-awake and quick-witted bird to avail himself of improved conditions is the unwelcome alien, the English, or house, sparrow. However we may deplore his presence, no one can deny him the sharpness of the street gamin and the ability to know a good thing when he sees it. Not only does he avail himself of all the erections of man for his unsightly nest,—the niches in the ornamental parts of our buildings, our window-sills, over our doors, behind our closed blinds, under our piazza roofs, in our open-work trolley posts, under our electric-light caps,—but he takes advantage of the industry of his neighbor. He seizes the woodpeckers' laboriously excavated homes, he robs the eave swallows of their adobe houses, he settles himself in every wren and bluebird and martin house he can find, never hesitating to fight for one when he cannot get it without. He even goes so far sometimes as to insist on using a door through which a woodpecker enters her home between our walls, no doubt making a separate nest inside.

Such evidence of progressive ideas on the part of birds are constantly coming to notice. The interest of bird-study is by no means exhausted. There is much to be found out. For what do we really know about the life-habits of even the birds we call common? We know to a fraction the size of the eggs, the length of every feather, and the smallest detail of anatomy, because it is easy enough to study dead birds. But who shall tell us of the life? Who has time and patience and understanding and insight to enter into their little lives, to interpret their actions, and to understand their motions? Who even shall present the bare facts, while sternly repressing his own imagination? Truly, this shall require a more profound student than has yet arisen. He who would accomplish this must give his days and nights to it. Evidence of a deeper life than we have given them credit for is constantly appearing to those who become really intimate with individuals.

Higginson in his delightful Out-door

Paper says, "The daily existence of every bird is a remote and bewitching mystery." If it has in these latter days become a little less mysterious, it is not a shade less bewitching. The story of a nest and the life about it, faithfully and sympathetically studied, is one of the most fascinating studies I know. It is full of vicissitudes, of joy and happiness, as well as anxieties and cares. Like our own home life, it develops character and brings into view qualities of mind and peculiarities of manners seen at no other time. It inspires the student with intense interest, and no less with profound astonishment at the resemblance of bird-life to the human.

The student of bird-life needs a good manual to identify, a good glass, a settled note-book habit, an unflinching love of truth, and beyond these plenty of time and patience. Enthusiasm and devotion will grow. With this equipment he will find a whole new world open before him.

—*Olive Thorne Miller.*

THE JOYOUS BIRDS.

The time of the singing of birds has come, to use the words of the old nature-lover, who thousands of years ago found in the return of these wanderers and in their sweet singing the harbinger of year; but, though he welcomed the coming of the birds as a part of the vernal orchestra and as adding charm to the renewed year, even then there were men of other stamp, who made ready their nets and snares to entrap their innocent victims, for "the snare of the fowler" and the "net spread for the bird" are also Bible allusions. And from that time to this there have been always foes lying in wait for them. Sometimes they were snared for food, often for ornament, especially among savages, who made no scruple to kill thousands upon thousands of tiny birds for a few feathers from each to deck the mantles of kings.

The savagery of humanity is a persistent growth. From the highest to the lowest in the land there are those who take delight in the mere pleasure of killing, especially if that pleasure be combined with the skill of the bird in trying to baffle the pursuer and the cunning of the hunter, who has the added joy of overcoming his innocent victim. The excuse of supplying the larder is a lame one nowadays, but it has to serve. The savagery of women finds excuse in the desire to beautify themselves, even at the cost of myriads of lives. Volumes have been written against the vanity and cruelty of women in this respect. Appeals by the ten thousands have been scattered broadcast over English-speaking lands, setting forth the need of bird-life for the good of the field, the garden, the orchard, for the beauty and charm of the landscape, and for the joy of their notes. Mothers have been besought, as they love their own little ones, to spare the beautiful bird mothers instead of allowing them to be ruthlessly slain, leaving their birdlings to starve that a pretty plume may droop over a summer hat.

At times there has been a pause in this cruel harvest of death, as if in answer to these appeals. Then inexorable fashion again decrees feathers and wings, and again the massacre begins, just as the Turks, after the promised reforms in Armenia, hastened to renew the bloody scenes of previous months.

In spite of the apathy of the mass of women and the apparently useless attempts that have been made heretofore by bird-lovers, another trial, in New England at least, is to be made by the Audubon Society. Though some of the finest birds have been nearly exterminated, there is hope that, if henceforth the pitiful remnant can be saved, nature will help them to increase and multiply and gladden the world again.

The purpose of the Audubon Society is "to discourage buying and wearing for ornamental purposes the feathers of any wild bird, and to otherwise further the protection of our native birds." In the circular of the society Chapman is quoted, who in his book on "Birds of Eastern North America" says of the snowy heron:—

"The curse of beauty has numbered the days of this, the most dainty and graceful of herons. Twenty years ago it was abundant in the South. Now it is the rarest of its family. The delicate aigrettes which it donned as its nuptial dress were its death warrant. Women demanded from the bird its wedding plumes, and man supplied the demand.

"The Florida herons have gone, and now he is pursuing the helpless birds to the

uttermost parts of the earth. Mercilessly they are shot down at their roosts or nesting grounds, the coveted feathers are stripped from their backs, the carcasses are left to rot, while the young in the nest above are starving."

The appeal is urgently made to all lovers of nature, since by this reckless demand of fashion the woods and fields are being stripped of one of their chief attractions and the country deprived of indispensable friends to agriculture. Any one wishing information or desiring to join the Audubon Society may address the secretary, Natural History Rooms, Boston.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Contributions to this column may be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.*]

I.

Shakespeare Puzzle.

(Answer each question by a title of one of Shakespeare's plays.)

1. How shall I season the soup?
2. What would you call Eliza's fuss and fury because the weather was down to zero?
3. What have you to say of the success of the expedition that began so badly?
4. What do you call a yard for a quart?
5. What is the last day of February?
5. What do you call this small village in which you live?
6. What is the 6th of January?
8. What were Cupid's unsuccessful attempts on Miss Rosalie's heart?
9. From whom did you buy your Venetian glasses?
10. What howled so fearfully all night?

II.

Charade.

Softly, stilly falls the moonlight,
Brightening o'er the mellow fields
Silently, until at daybreak
My *first* unto Aurora yields.

From the noontide's sultry zephyrs
'Neath the oak's wide-spreading boughs,
Seeking for my welcome *second*,
Come the weary, restless cows.

In the deep, dark, tangled wildwood
Hangs my *whole* in clusters red.
Beautiful, yet poison-breathing;
He who eats the fruit is dead!

III.

Anagrams.

1. A mule sells rolls, Jew!
2. Deers lack chins.
3. Fanny B. Stone led.
4. I dare salt fun.
5. I make my wheel crack a tea-pail.
6. Wolf howl! Stray here! Ned growl.

IV.

Rhymed Numerical Enigma.

His 3-2-1-4 was sad, his garments poor.
He shivered 2-1 the pavement wet.
He showed me 3-4-1 fine fish he said
He'd caught that morning with his 1-4-3.
"And 1-2-3-4, how fine they are!" he cried.
"Will you 1-2-3 buy 2-1-4 Miss?" I sighed.
"Not if you had a 3-2-1," I said.
And 3-2 my home I quickly sped.
I had 1-2 money, you must know,
And that was why I left him so.

V.

Enigma.

As soon as I'm for business fit,
My master throws me in a pit,
And there does plunge me to and fro
Until a set of teeth I show
In number oft above a score,
Which wood or stone can't stand before.
Whene'er my work I do come nigh,
I make the very dust to fly.
I never work but with my teeth,—
Then am I not a hungry thief?

Answers to Puzzles in March Number.

I.

Bradford, Taunton, Amesbury, Marblehead, Lowell, Swampscott.

II.

Knot.

III.

Spy.	Spire.	Spiced.
Fee.	Fear.	Feast.
Tore.	Tore.	Toast.
Ye.	Year.	Yeast.
Boo.	Boor.	Boost.
Mole	Molar.	Molest.
Bee.	Beer.	Beast.
Go.	Gore.	Ghost.
Some.	Summer.	
Mite.	Mitre.	
Y.	Wire.	
Must.	Muster.	

IV.

Letter R.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any de sire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, 79 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Kindly send subscriptions to the Treasurer, not to the Editor.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The address of our treasurer for the winter months is Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Mrs. Mattie Leach has moved from Flavien, Louisiana, to Ashville, Texas.

Mrs. Sue T. Deal of Cedar Valley North Carolina, has moved to King's Mountain, North Carolina. Her son, John S. Deal, is at Dunlap, North Carolina.

The address of Mrs. A. M. Kiger is now Grove City, Illinois.

Mrs. N. W. Deering has left Quincy, Florida, and cannot at present give any address, as she will not remain in one place.

The address of Mrs. Lessie Parker is changed from Goodman, to Fry, North Carolina.

The address of Mrs. W. C. Smith is changed from Chase, Kansas, to Sterling, Kansas.

ANY BRANCH OR MEMBER OF THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, WHICH HAS DURING THE WINTER RECEIVED REQUESTS FOR MONEY IS REQUESTED TO REPORT THIS TO OUR SECRETARY, MISS LANGMAID.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.